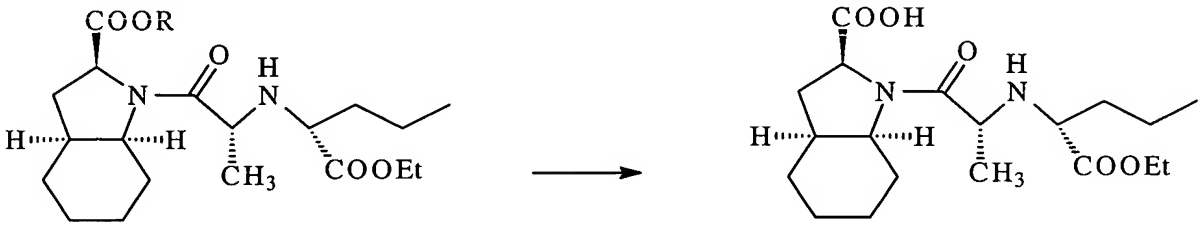
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-20, 22-23 and 25, cancel claims 21 and 24 without prejudice or disclaimer and add new claim 26 as follows:

[[1]] 1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril of formula (I) from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



(II) (I)

wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of a base which forms a pharmaceutically acceptable salt with said free acid formed by said deprotection.

[[2]] 2. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1, wherein R represents optionally substituted aralkyl.

[[3]] 3. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.

[[4]] 4. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 2, wherein R represents 4-halo substituted, or 4-C_{1-4}alkoxy substituted benzyl.

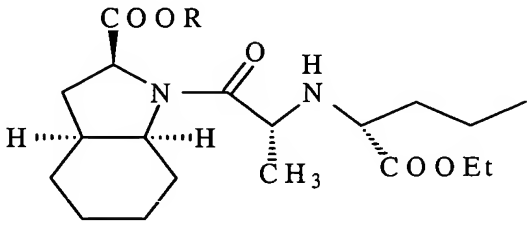
[[5]] 5. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 4, wherein R represents 4-Cl benzyl, or 4-methoxy benzyl.

[[6]] 6. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein said deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of a noble metal catalyst.

[[7]] 7. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 6, wherein the noble metal catalyst comprises palladium-on-chacoal.

[[8]] 8. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein said base comprises t-butylamine.

[[9]] 9. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing perindopril t-butylamine from a protected precursor compound of formula (II)



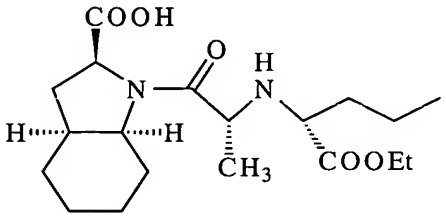
(II)

wherein R represents a carboxyl protecting group, which process comprises subjecting a compound of formula (II) to deprotection of the carboxylic group COOR attached to the heterocyclic ring so as to yield the corresponding free acid, which deprotection is carried out in the presence of t-butylamine so as to form the t-butylamine salt of perindopril.

[[10]] 10. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 9, wherein R represents unsubstituted benzyl.

[[11]] 11. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 9 [[or 10]], wherein deprotection comprises hydrogenolysis in the presence of palladium-on-chacoal.

[[12]] 12. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, which further comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril obtained by said process so as to yield a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of hydrated perindopril of formula (Ia)



nH_2O

(Ia)

wherein n is an integer of 1 to 5, or a reciprocal of integers 2 to 5.

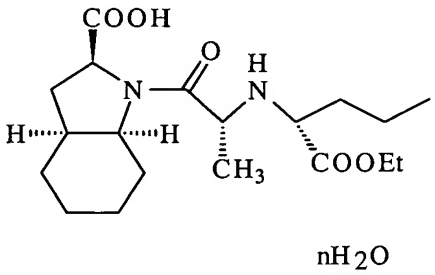
[[13]] 13. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 12, wherein n is 1.

[[14] 14. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a monohydrate of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril, which process comprises hydrating a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril so as to yield said monohydrate.

[[15]] 15. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~any of claims 12 to 14~~ claim 12, wherein perindopril t-butylamine is hydrated to yield perindopril-t-butylamine monohydrate.

[[16]] 16. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril optionally in hydrated form, prepared by a process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 15~~ claim 1.

[[17]] 17. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt of hydrated perindopril of formula (Ia)



(Ia)

wherein n is an integer of 1 to 5, or a reciprocal of integers 2 to 5.

[[18]] 18. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt according to claim 17, where n is 1.

[[19]] 19. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutically acceptable salt according to claim 17 [[or 18]], which is the t-butylamine salt.

[[20]] 20. (Currently Amended) Perindopril t-butylamine monohydrate.

21. (Cancelled)

[[22]] 22. (Currently Amended) Perindopril t-butylamine monohydrate ~~characterised as~~ having an X-ray powder diffraction pattern with characteristic peaks (2θ): 9.5504, 14.8600, 15.7486, 16.5400, 20.0400, 21.0499, 22.0600, 24.1744, 26.3300 and 27.1600.

[[23]] 23. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition comprising an effective ACE inhibitory amount of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril according to ~~any of claims 16 to 22~~ claim 16, together with one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers, diluents or excipients therefor.

24. (Cancelled)

[[25]] 25. (Currently Amended) A method of inhibiting ACE in a patient in need thereof comprising administering to said patient an effective ACE inhibitory amount of a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril according to ~~any of claims 16 to 22~~ claim 16.

26. (New) A method of manufacturing a medicament for inhibiting ACE comprising using a pharmaceutically acceptable salt of perindopril of claim 16.